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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: HAITI, OBAMA PRESIDENCY, KUNDUZ AIRSTRIKE,
IPCC;BERLIN

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- [1](#)1. Lead Stories Summary

ZDF-TV's heute opened with a story on the security alert at Munich airport. ARD-TV's primetime Tagesschau opened with a story on the aftershock in Haiti. Newspapers led with stories on many different topics, including the beginning of the Bundestag defense committee's investigation of the Kunduz airstrikes. Sueddeutsche headlined: "Guttenberg increasingly under pressure." Die Welt highlighted that Guttenberg said Germans are not cowards in Afghanistan. Berliner Zeitung and FT Deutschland led with stories on weapons lobbyist Schneider's trial, noting that he claimed to have given donations to the CSU. Frankfurter Allgemeine emphasized that the federal court strengthened the rights of the Bundestag. Editorials focused on yesterday's Bundestag debate, the election result in Massachusetts, and the German debate on Afghanistan.

- [1](#)2. Haiti Earthquake

All media continued to report that the situation in Haiti is difficult. However, the story was no longer a lead story in most media. Coverage of the role the U.S. is playing is positive.

Weekly Die Zeit began its front page article on Haiti with the subheadline: "The earthquake destroyed Haiti. Now humanity, under the leadership of America, is proving that it is capable of generosity and can provide assistance that transcends all political borders." The weekly added: "Barack Obama has not just committed himself to a gigantic rescue operation, but also to an enormous effort to rebuild a country. Of course, this is in America's own interests. However, Obama has done the right thing and takes great political risks. If the mission succeeds, it will have many fathers

and mothers: the UN, the U.S., Latin American neighbors and the EU. If it fails, only Obama will be blamed."

Die Welt noted in a front-page teaser that "the security situation is stabilizing thanks to the efforts of thousands of U.S. soldiers. Aid supplies are also slowly reaching the people." In a front-page editorial, Die Welt added: "Haiti, this small, strategically insignificant country in the Caribbean, this faraway and unhappy place that never succeeded to rise from the dust, arouses global sympathy. Those who thought that the interest will decline after a few days and that the public would turn to other topics are wrong. In natural disasters, all men are equal."

In a lengthy report on Haiti, Stern magazine underlined that even the U.S. base in Guantanamo is playing a positive role in the rescue efforts. It highlighted that "Guantanamo turned into the base for assistance flights" and added: "In Washington, Barack Obama lined up with former Presidents George W. Bush and William Clinton to include the whole nation in the aid program worth 100 million, which includes the deployment of 10,000 soldiers and hundreds of civilian aid workers. The U.S. sent a whole fleet of aircraft carriers and swimming hospitals and took over the control of the airport in Port-au-Prince. Even the U.S. military base in Guantanamo-which is infamous for the detention center-turned into a base for the humanitarian mission. The U.S. enclave is only 350 km away from the epicenter of the earthquake. Only last Saturday, 29 flights of the Operation Unified Response, as the earthquake assistance is called in military lingo, started from and landed in Guantanamo."

ARD-TV's Tagesschau reported: "This most serious of all aftershocks

dashed the little hope people had gotten in recent days. The good news is that a hospital ship of the U.S. navy arrived today and the first patient was a Haitian boy with severe burns."

13. Massachusetts Senate Race

Frankfurter Allgemeine opined in a front-page editorial: "The President's priority of reforming the healthcare system might be the first to fall victim to the new situation. Although local circumstances played a role in the special Massachusetts Senate race and the Democratic candidate was anything but exciting, the loss of the seat is a tough hit against the President and his party. The declining popularity of Obama's policies has now been made official: the pendulum is swinging back; many independent voters are turning their backs on the 2008 election winner. The writing for the Congressional elections this autumn is on the wall: if the Republicans can win in Massachusetts, they can compete anywhere."

Under the headline "Humiliation for Obama," Sueddeutsche remarked: "Brown sensed the discontent of the people and presented himself as a man who could give a voice to this frustration. Like Obama, he won as a candidate against the political establishment. His triumph is a humiliation for the President, who wanted to challenge the system himself.... In his first year, Obama rescued banks, prevented the automobile industry from collapsing and launched a huge economic stimulus program. He hoped that this Herculean task would give him the leeway for the rest of his agenda: the healthcare reform, climate protection, investments into schools. However, these are obviously not the priorities of the people at this moment."

Scott Brown ran in Massachusetts with two promises that touched the nerves of the people. He wants to stop the healthcare reform and reduce the enormous national deficit. These are the roots for the discontent with Obama. They are suspicious about his reform agenda.

And they are under the impression that the Democrats gamble away the future of the country if they continue to increase the debt."

FT Deutschland editorialized: "Losing one of the most liberal constituencies in the U.S. to the Republicans is difficult to do... The defeat in Massachusetts damages Barack Obama's shining nimbus throughout the world. He is no longer the guy that can win anything and who can persuade people easily. This will damage his policy at home and abroad. Obama and his party must blame themselves. They cannot simply blame their candidate, as weak as she might have been. It was careless to trust that voters would be faithful to the Democrats."

Handelsblatt noted: "The landslide of the Republicans in the special Massachusetts elections also had local reasons. However, it brought Obama and the Democrats down to earth with a bump. It is even worse: it will soon turn out as a turning point. So far, the President ruled from the height of the power. The loss of this Senate seat deprives him of his creative majority in Congress. There will be Congressional elections in autumn and because Obama coolly calculates, he will give up his role of a statesman and enter the election campaign. He will make his domestic and foreign policies more American."

14. Afghanistan-Kunduz Airstrike

Sueddeutsche commented on Defense Minister zu Guttenberg's statement on the September 4 airstrike in Kunduz: "The minister faced a difficult situation. He had to deal with a colonel who had obviously made serious mistakes. However, the troops stood behind the colonel and expected their new defense minister to express his solidarity. Guttenberg wanted to express solidarity-not just for opportunistic reasons, but because the Bundeswehr is close to his heart. As a result, he accepted the wording of his military

advisors and topped that by saying that the attack was unavoidable. Already at the time, experts shook their heads about this brazenness. We now know that the military assessment of the events do not justify Guttenberg's assessment."

Die Welt editorialized: "ISAF Commander in Afghanistan McChrystal has called on the Bundeswehr to take more risks in the north of the country. That sounds as if he is asking for much. The truth is that this is only the consequence of McChrystal's new strategy that gives the highest priority to the protection of the people. Military experts agree that this is the best strategy to fight the insurgency. The basic idea behind it is that we will win against the Taliban only if the majority of the people are behind us. To achieve this, the allies most especially guarantee security, which is the condition for the reconstruction."

15. Climate Protection--IPCC

Several papers carried reports on the confession of UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) that it made mistakes concerning the forecast for the Himalaya glaciers. Frankfurter Allgemeine headlined: "Setback for climate change," as "the IPCC admitted that it warned against the melting of the Himalaya glaciers in a widely publicized report in 2007 without having any scientific evidence for it." FT Deutschland headlined: "IPCC admits mistake of forecast," and added: "The IPCC vice president has admitted of massive mistakes concerning the forecast of the melting of the Himalaya glaciers. The forecast that the glaciers would disappear by 2035 was wrong and will be revised, Jean-Pascal van Ypersele said."

MURPHY